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INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 ACDA-12 AF-10 ARA-10 TRSE-00 EB-08 OMB-01
HA-05 IO-13 FRB-03 COME-00 NEA-11 /149 W
-----092173 291904Z/47

R 290930Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BERN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3125
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINR, SZ
SUBJ: MEETING WITH SWISS FEDERAL COUNCILOR AUBERT

1. SUMMARY. I HOSTED LUNCH MEETING JUNE 27 FOR FEDERAL COUNCILOR PIERRE AUBERT (FONMIN) AND FED POLITICAL DEPT SECY GEN ALBERT WEITNAUER. SWISS CONTRASTED SOVIET ATTACHMENT TO DETENTE WITH SOVIET MILITARY BUILDUP; APPLAUDED PRESIDENT CARTER'S ANNAPOLIS SPEECH; NOTED SOVIET CONCERN WITH CHINA AND CHINESE FEARS WAR INEVITABLE WITH USSR. AUBERT SAID CERTAIN TECHNOLOGY TRANSFERS TO USSR COULD HELP DECREASE TENSION BY RAISING LIVING STANDARDS. SAID EUROPEAN DISUNITY HINDERS CSCE PROGRESS. EXPRESSED INTEREST IN US ECONOMY. OFFERED HELP PROMOTE MIDDLE EAST PEACE. DESIRES VISIT US. END SUMMARY.

2. I OUTLINED FOR AUBERT HOW WE VIEW SOVIET/US RELATIONS (DRAWING ON SECRETARY'S PRESENTATION IN LONDON TO CHIEFS OF MISSION MEETING); STRESSED STRONGLY US PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL REACTION TO SOVIET/CUBAN ADVENTURES IN AFRICA. AUBERT, SPEAKING PERSONALLY, SAID HE SHARED US ASSESSMENT OF SOVIET POLICY; APPLAUDED STRONG US REACTION

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TO SOVIET MOVES IN AFRICA; SWISS AND EUROPEANS RELIEVED US HAD RESPONDED. AFRICAN AMBASSADORS HAD TOLD AUBERT THEY CONCERNED ABOUT SOVIET MOVES IN AFRICA. AUBERT FELT WORLD OPINION REACTS MORE READILY WHEN SOVIET MOVES ARE BLATANT THAN CLANDESTINE. WELCOMED RESTRAINED FIRMNESS OF PRESIDENT'S ANNAPOLIS SPEECH WHICH HE CONSIDERED MORE TIMELY.

3. WEITNAUER, WHO RECENTLY VISITED MOSCOW (AND WAS THERE WHEN PRESIDENT MADE SPEECH), SAID SOVIETS ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO DETENTE. SOVIET INTERLOCUTORS EXPRESSED GREAT CONCERN OVER SPEECH. SAID DETENTE PROMOTED BY BREZHNEV SUPPORTED BY MANY YOUNGER SOVIET OFFICIALS; FUTURE OF DETENTE MIGHT BE IN DOUBT IF BREZHNEV LEFT OFFICE. AUBERT LESS SANGUINE ABUT SOVIET INTENTIONS; HIS VIEW THAT EUROPEANS, INCLUDING SWISS, WOULD HAVE FALLEN UNDER SOVIET INFLUENCE LONG AGO WERE IT NOT FOR US PROTECTION. CONTRASTED SOVIET PROFESSION OF DESIRE PROMOTE DETENTE WITH CONTINUED ARMS BUILDUP VIS-A-VIS NATO THOUGH SOVIET FORCES ALREADY AT SUPERIOR LEVELS. WEITNAUER VIEWED SOVIETS POLITICALLY, MORALLY AND ECONOMICALLY WEAKER THAN WEST; SOVIETS REACT MILITARILY TO SHOW STRENGTH, THOUGH ARMS BUILDUP INCREASINGLY BURDENS ECONOMIC CAPACITY. SAID RUSSIANS HISTORICALLY FOLLOWED DEFENSIVE POLICY; RARELY ATTACKED; BUT PURSUED IMPERIALIST EXPANSIONALRY POLICY WHEN NO RESISTANCE ENCOUNTERED. SAID SOVIETS ONLY UNDERSTAND STRONG LANGUAGE; URGED FIRM US POLICY. BELIEVED RUSSIANS AND GERMANS HISTORICALLY HAVE MANY COMMON INTERESTS; SAW SIGNIFICANCE IN BREZHNEV'S BONN VISIT.

4. ON DISARMAMENT, AUBERT RESTATED SWISS VIEW THAT OFFENSIVE ARMS SHOULD BE FIRST PRIORITY OF DISARMAMENT.
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STRESSED SWISS HAVE ONLY DEFENSIVE POSTURE IN ARMED NEUTRALITY. WEITNAUER NOTED SOVIET AMBASSADOR LAVROV TOLD SWISS THERE ARE "GOOD NEUTRALS AND OTHERS," STRESSED THAT AUSTRIA (MILITARILY WEAKER THAN SWITZERLAND) IS "GOOD NEUTRAL." AUBERT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT TECHNOLOGICAL EXPORTS COULD ENABLE SOVIETS INCREASE QUALITATIVE ARMS CAPABILITY. AUBERT'S VIEW THAT TECHNOLOGY EXPORTS COULD BE POSITIVE WHEN THEY INCREASE SOVIET STANDARD OF LIVING, GREATER PRIVATE OWNERSHIP AND SENSE OF INDEPENDENCE, BECAUSE THAT WOULD DIMINISH THREAT OF WAR.

5. AUBERT NOTED CHINESE MINISTER KU NU, WHO RECENTLY VISITED SWITZERLAND, REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED VIEW WAR WITH SOVIETS INEVITABLE. WEITNAUER SAID SOVIETS ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT CHINA; POTENTIAL CONFLICT IS SERIOUS CONCERN TO ALL. SAID SOME SOVIET GENERALS TEMPTED LAUNCH PRE-EMPTIVE ATTACK ON CHINA WHILE CHINA WEAKER THAN PERMIT CHINESE TIME BUILDUP QUALITATIVE ARMS CAPABILITIES. HOWEVER, SHEER SIZE OF CHINA IS ONE CAUSE FOR SOVIET HESITANCY.

6. AUBERT BRIEFLY MENTIONED MONTREAUX MEETING ON SWISS

CSCE PROPOSAL FOR ARBITRATION OF INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS;
HOPED FOR GOOD RESULTS. SAID EUROPEAN DISUNITY IS MAJOR
ROADBLOCK TO CSCE PROGRESS. BELIEVED US VIEWS SIMILAR TO
SWISS ON CSCE ISSUES.

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7. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON US ECONOMY AND DOLLAR OUTLOOK, I STRESSED IMPORTANCE RECENT VISIT TO SWITZERLAND OF FRB CHAIRMAN MILLER. NOTED FRB AND USG POLICIES AIM AT CONTROLLING INFLATION, REDUCING US TRADE AND BUDGET DEFICITS. AUBERT STRESSED IMPORTANCE TO SWISS US FULFILL OFFSET COMMITMENT ON F-5E TIGER PURCHASE. I EMPHASIZED US EFFORTS TO DATE AND DETERMINATION TO THEIR OBLIGATION.

8. AUGERT SUPPORTED US POLICY IN MIDDLE EAST. BELIEVED ISRAEL REQUIRES REINFORCED US ASSURANCE, OR EVEN GUARANTEE, FOR ITS SURVIVAL TO ENABLE ISRAELIS ACCEPT ARAB PROPOSALS. URGED US CONTINUE SUPPORT SADAT'S PEACE INITIATIVE TO KEEP IT FROM FALLING; BACKED US PLANE SALES TO EGYPT. STRESSED SADAT'S RISKS TAKEN IN REMOVING EGYPT FROM SOVIET INFLUENCE AND LAST NOVEMBER'S PEACE INITIATIVE. EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT FUTURE EGYPTIAN POLICY IF SADAT'S PEACE INITIATIVE FAILED. AUBERT PERSONALLY CONSIDERED BEGIN'S POLICY TOO RIGID. SAID SWISS PREPARED ASSIST WHENEVER CAN BE HELPFUL IN PROMOTING PEACE; COULD PLAY NEUTRAL INTERMEDIARY MESSENGER ROLE; COULD HOST OFFICIAL TALKS OR UNOFFICIAL CONTACTS IN DISCREET, QUIET SETTING

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IN SWITZERLAND.

9. COMMENT. AUBERT IMPRESSED ME AS TALENTED, ENERGETIC AND WELL-INFORMED NATIONAL LEADER BUT CONSTRAINED BY TRADITIONAL SWISS NEUTRALITY AND COLLEGIAL SYSTEM OF EXECUTIVE POLICYMAKING. HE IS OBVIOUSLY STILL LEARNING HIS JOB. HE PREFERS DIRECT, FRANK DISCUSSION; PERSONAL VIEWS PARALLEL THOSE OF US ON MANY ISSUES. HIS ATTITUDE GENUINELY FRIENDLY TO US; REPEATEDLY REFERRED TO IMPORTANCE OF US STRENGTH FOR INDEPENDENCE OF WEAKER NATIONS; VIEWED US AS "BIG ST BERNARD." AUBERT EXPRESSED DESIRE VISIT US WITH MUCH TIME FOR PRIVATE TRAVEL TO BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE. WARNER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BERN03125
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780269-0681
Format: TEL
From: BERN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978069/aaaaahhx.tel
Line Count: 188
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: bac6e390-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2468422
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING WITH SWISS FEDERAL COUNCILOR AUBERT
TAGS: PFOR, PINR, SZ, US, UR, (AUBERT, PIERRE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bac6e390-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014